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The Eisenhower Manifesto

The statement of principles drawn up by former President Eisenhower as a guide in the selection of a Republican Presidential nominee is plainly designed to throw the influence of the party's most distinguished leader against Senator Barry Goldwater and the backward-looking philosophy he espouses.

Mr. Eisenhower has wisely avoided any direct expression of personal preference or antagonism, but the stress he has placed on a positive and imaginative role for the Federal Government in recognizing the need for national solutions to national problems puts him at the opposite pole from the negativism that underlies the vaporous program of the Arizona Senator and his right-wing enthusiasts.

It is true that Mr. Goldwater will find it easy to identify with many of the generalities in the Eisenhower credo, especially since he has been on several sides of almost every issue in his attempts to clarify just where he does stand on civil rights, Social Security, T.V.A., poverty and the correct policy for the United States in Cuba, South Vietnam and the United Nations.

But, even with due allowance for the vagaries of the Goldwater program, its main thrust is counter to the principles General Eisenhower considers "in the best interest of the nation and in the finest traditions of the Republican party." Indeed, most of the achievements the former President cites with greatest pride in reviewing the record of his eight years in the White House

involve the extension of Federal responsibility in areas Senator Goldwater considers welfare-state "me tooism." The Eisenhower emphasis on loyal support for the U.N. in keeping the peace and on the need for shunning "impulsiveness" in reacting to developments overseas is a clear rebuke to the "shoot from the hip" type of diplomacy so popular with the party's right wing.

What emerges most forcefully from the Eisenhower declaration is an awareness of the danger that the Republican party may destroy itself as an effective element in the nation's political life if it turns toward reaction and sterility in its approach to national needs. The results of the primaries held thus far—from New Hampshire to Oregon—make it evident that the Goldwater candidacy is repellent to the great mass of dedicated Republicans. His appeal would be even less to the uncommitted voters who hold the real power in any election. And the danger is great that he would carry to defeat with him many of the party's candidates for Congress and for state and local office.

The crucial G.O.P. pre-convention test comes in California a week from tomorrow. Governor Rockefeller is Mr. Goldwater's sole rival in the primary there. If he wins, he will not necessarily get the nomination in August but he will insure the convention's rejection of the Goldwater candidacy, with all its negative implications. The Republican party cannot survive—much less win—if its answers to the problems of tomorrow are those that would have seemed retrogressive a generation ago.